

Brown and he did handle the Scottish Whigs with great severity ; Marlborough did enter into treasonable communications with James II. Under Macaulay's distortion of the evidence and his misstatements of the facts there was a substratum of fact. The case of Penn is much worse because there is no real foundation for the charges Macaulay brings against him. \* To speak the whole truth concerning Penn ; he states, <sup>f</sup> is a task which requires some courage : for he is rather a mythical than a historical person/ He goes on to say that Penn\* under the reign of James II, became \* a courtier and almost a favourite | that he was \* without doubt a man of eminent virtue ' but that <sup>i</sup> his rectitude was not altogether proof against the temptations to which it was exposed ', and that consequently he bore a chief part in some transactions condemned ... by the general sense of honest men \*.<sup>1</sup>

As a proof, he alleges that Penn helped to extort money from the young women threatened with punishment for taking part in Monmouth's reception at Taunton. Their relations had to pay a fine which was fixed at ^7,000 was to go into the pockets of the Queen's maids of honour. They asked a local gentleman to extort the money for them, but he ' excused himself from taking any part in a transaction so scandalous \*. Penn\* however, according to Macaulay, accepted the task.

The maids of honour then requested William Penn to act for them ; and Penn accepted the commission. Yet it should seem that a little of the pertinacious scrupulosity which he had often shown about taking off his hat would not have been altogether out of place on this occasion. He probably silenced the remonstrances of his conscience by repeating to himself that none of the money which he ex-

11, 502-4 (iv).